

Doctors of Optometry examine people's eyes to diagnose vision problems and eye diseases. They test visual acuity, depth and color perception, and the ability to focus and coordinate the eyes. They also diagnose and manage eye conditions related to systemic disease such as diabetes and high blood pressure. It usually takes at least 8 years to become an optometrist: 4 years of undergraduate college and 4 years of optometry school. For some specialties, further training is required.

Note: There are two different types of eye doctors, optometrists and ophthalmologists. The difference is that ophthalmologists must complete general medical school first.

Degree

Optometry schools award the Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree. Optometrists must also pass board exams and be licensed in the state where they practice.

Admission

Admission is competitive. In order to compete for admission, students are advised to complete a baccalaureate degree. Although students come from a variety of undergraduate degree programs, majoring in the natural sciences is typical (for example, biology, chemistry, etc.). Optometry schools seek students with excellent academic preparation, a strong GPA (3.0 or higher), good interpersonal skills, leadership ability, a disposition to help others, and a strong work ethic. First-hand experience within the field is important, and sometimes required (ex. shadow an optometrist, conduct informational interviews, etc.). All schools require a personal interview and Optometry Admission Test (OAT) scores.

Typical Minimum Prerequisite Courses

Two semesters of biology with labs; two semesters of physics with labs; four semesters of chemistry with labs including organic; two semesters of English; two semesters of humanities; two semesters of social sciences; one semester of algebra and trigonometry; one semester of calculus.

Optometry Colleges may prefer prerequisites be completed at 4-year colleges and/or for students to take upper-level science courses at 4-year institutions.

Examples of MCC Courses Include

- BIO 155 – Intro to Cell & Molecular Bio
- BIO 156 – Intro to Organismal Bio & Eco
- BIO 144 & 145 – Human Anatomy & Physiology I & II
- BIO 202 or 209 – Microbiology
- MTH 160 – Statistics I
- MTH 210 – Calculus I
- ENG 101 and/or ENG 200
- PSY 101 – Intro Psychological Science
- CHE 151 & 152 – General College Chemistry I & II
- CHE 251 & 252 – Organic Chemistry I & II
- PHY 161 & 261 – University Physics I & II

Also recommended: Additional biology, social science, and ethics courses. Check with schools for specific requirements.

Partial List of Colleges Offering a Degree in Optometry

(Students complete a bachelor's degree first and then apply)

- SUNY College of Optometry
- Pennsylvania College of Optometry
- Salus University
- Nova Southeastern University
- The Ohio State University
- Illinois College of Optometry
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences
- New England College of Optometry
- [Complete list of Optometry Schools](#)

Additional Information

- [USDL, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Optometrists](#)
- [American Optometric Association](#)
- [Accreditation Council on Optometric Education](#)
- [Association of Schools & Colleges of Optometry \(ASCO\)](#)

Note: While every effort is made to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate, students are advised to contact transfer institutions for specific course requirements and the most up-to-date information.